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The GLOBSEC Intelligence Reform Initiative (GIRI)

The integrity of the transatlantic security architecture is at risk. Terrorist attacks in France, Belgium, Germany as well as across the United States have exposed major loopholes in this architecture. More specifically, they have challenged the ability of European and US intelligence agencies to effectively collect, analyse and disseminate data on what some have labelled a 'virtual pack of lone wolves' engaged in perpetrating terror attacks. This new nature of international terrorism necessitates a joint transatlantic approach and a set of counterterrorism strategies, which rest on twenty-first century means, technology and alliances.

The GIRI Initiative's primary focus is the growing domestic security threat across the European and US continents. Its aim is to identify key tactical and operational problems and generate practical solutions to address these. Nevertheless, it recognises that addressing root causes as well as Europe's and the US's engagement in containing the terror threat beyond its borders are fundamental to solving this complex and arguably global security threat. These issues should therefore be of key concern to policymakers across the transatlantic space.

At the heart of the GLOBSEC Intelligence Reform Initiative lies a report, which aims to contribute to the debate on transatlantic counterterrorism intelligence reform with analysis and recommendations based on decades-long experience of former high-level professionals and policymakers in the security, defence, home affairs and intelligence realms. Led by former US Secretary of Homeland Security, Hon. Michael Chertoff, the Initiative's Honorary Steering Committee consists of John, Baron Reid of Cardowan, former Home and Defence Secretary, Member of the House of Lords, Dr. August Hanning, former State Secretary in the Federal Interior Ministry of the Federal Republic of Germany and Director of the Federal Intelligence Service (BND), and Hon. Carl Bildt, former Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden.

The aim of the report is threefold. Firstly, it outlines the nature of the ongoing terrorist challenge and identifies vulnerabilities in the anatomy of the transatlantic counterterrorism and intelligence infrastructure. Secondly, it identifies key areas of reform in the fields of intelligence collection, analysis, sharing, operationalisation, benchmarking and training. Finally, it puts forth a set of practical solutions to key problems within the counterterrorism-intelligence nexus designed to address these vulnerabilities and increase the transatlantic partners' capacity to counter this increasingly sophisticated and challenging security threat.

The Honorary Steering committee and its research team, led by Daniela Richterova and Patrick Bury, have thus far conducted a series of consultations, meetings and interviews with former intelligence practitioners, policymakers, academics, civil servants, judges, counterterrorism and area studies experts from Europe as well as the US. These have enabled the group to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature of the problem, its possible solutions as well as the wealth and diversity in approaches to the issue of counterterrorism within the transatlantic space.